A

SERMON

Occaſioned by the

DEATH

OF THE LATE REVEREND

Mr. EDWARD GODWIN,

PREACHED AT

LITTLE St. HELENS,

April 8, 1764.

To the CHRISTIAN SOCIETY
that attended on his MINISTRY.

By WILLIAM LANGFORD, *D. D.*

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JOHN XII. 26.

If any Man ſerve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there ſhall alſo my Servant be.

IT is appointed unto all Men once to die; but as the Chriſtian differs from others in his Life, ſo in his Death, for he lives to the Lord, and dies to the Lord; the Words of our bleſſed Saviour which I have offered to your ſerious Conſideration contain the Character of his ſincere Diſciples and their future Reward, the firſt for our Imitation, the laſt for our Comfort; they are therefore I apprehend very ſuitable to the Occaſion of my preſent Appearance in this mournful Aſſembly, which is humbly to propoſe ſome Advice and Conſolation to you under the afflictive Providence that has

by Death taken from you your aged, worthy, and beloved Paſtor.

That we may underſtand the Text it is proper to look back to the 20th Verſe of the Chapter, wherein we find certain *Greeks* (moſt probably they were *Gentiles* proſelyted to the *Jewiſh* Religion) among them that came up to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip God at the Feaſt of the Paſſover; and they ſignified to one of Chriſt's Diſciples their Deſire to ſee him, this Diſciple communicated the Matter to another, and both joined in relating it to Jeſus; he received the Report with Joy, and foretold the future Converſion of the *Gentiles*. *Jeſus anſwered ſaying, The Hour is come when the Son of Man ſhould be glorified*, ver. 23.

'You have now before your Eyes a Speci-
'men of my approaching Glory; for
'theſe *Greeks* are the firſt Fruits of a nu-
'merous Church that I ſhall have in all
'Nations; but I muſt die before this ga-
'thering of the People unto me ſhall be
'effected.'

Of this he ſpeaks in the 24th Verſe, by the Similitude of Seed ſown in the Earth: *Verily verily I ſay unto you, Except a Corn of*

of Wheat fall into the Ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much Fruit. In like Manner, my Death ſhall produce a plentiful Harveſt of converted and ſaved Souls in every Country and Age.

But that none might be deceived by falſe Notions of Chriſt's Kingdom, and think it would conſiſt in earthly Power, Riches, Honours, and Pleaſures, he acquainted his Hearers with the grievous Perſecutions that would befal his Subjects ſoon after his Reſurrection, and the Self-denial that would be required of all his Diſciples to the End of the World, ver. 25. *He that loveth his Life, ſhall loſe it: And he that hateth his Life in this World, ſhall keep it unto Life eternal.* 'He that loveth his natural Life 'more than me, and will not ſurrender it at 'my Call, and for my Sake, ſhall loſe the 'Happineſs of the Life to come; and he 'that comparatively hateth his Life in this 'World, and is willing to offer it up as a 'Sacrifice for my Goſpel, ſhall reap an ever-'laſting Reward in Heaven.'

This Doctrine is confirmed and illuſtrated by the Words of my Text: *If any Man*

ſerve

ſerve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there ſhall alſo my Servant be.

'This is the invariable Law of my King-
'dom, that if any Man (*Jew* or *Gentile*)
'will be my Servant and Subject, he muſt,
'like myſelf, reſign abſolutely to the Will
'of God, and obſerve all my Command-
'ments; and let him know that he ſhall
'be no loſer by reaſon of this in the laſt
'Iſſue of Things, for *where I am, there*
'*alſo ſhall my Servant be.* I am now in
'Heaven (as God) and in a little Time
'ſhall (as Man) be there, and with me ſhall
'every one of my Servants live and reign
'for ever; *if any Man ſerve me, him will*
'*my Father honour.*'

If it be aſked how could Chriſt be in Heaven while he dwelt here below? We muſt anſwer this was the Reſult of the Union of the divine and human Natures in his Perſon, and included in the great Myſtery of Godlineſs, *God manifeſted in the Fleſh.*

But it is not my Intention to diſcourſe now on this ſublime Article of our Faith; I ſhall from the Paſſage of Scripture which has been briefly explained, endeavour to ſhew,

I. That

I. That every true Chriſtian is a Servant of Chriſt.

II. That every Servant of Chriſt muſt follow him.

III. That every one who ſerves and follows Chriſt in this World, ſhall be glorified with him eternally in Heaven.

I. Every true Chriſtian is a Servant of Chriſt.

As he is Lord of all, ſo all Mankind (not excepting thoſe who are Strangers and Enemies to him) are the Subjects of his univerſal Government, and muſt appear before his Tribunal to give an Account of themſelves; and all that name his Name profeſs to be his Servants, though many of them are wicked and ſlothful Servants, who bury his Talents, or waſte his Goods, and beat their Fellow-ſervants, and run into all ſorts of Diſorders, their Lord has ſaid he will *come in a Day when* they *look not for him, and in an Hour that* they *are not aware of*; *and* will *cut* them *aſunder, and appoint* them *their Portion with the Hypocrites* *;

* Matth. xxiv. 50, 51.

but

but ſincere Chriſtians ſerve Chriſt in Spirit and Truth. And,

1. They are his willing Servants.

As he redeemed them by his Blood, and hath called them by his Grace, ſo they truſting in his Atonement for Pardon and Acceptance with God, have unfeignedly given their ownſelves to him; they have not only received him for Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs, and Sanctification and Redemption, but they have by a voluntary Act, under the efficacious Light and Influence of his good Spirit, dedicated their Souls and Bodies, and their all to him, as their Owner and Governor, laſt End and eternal Portion.

They were made willing in the Day of his Power; high Thoughts and lofty Imaginations have been caſt down, and every Thought of their Hearts captivated to the Obedience of Chriſt: whether they are Miniſters or private Chriſtians they ſerve the Lord by Choice, and with Purpoſe of Heart.

2. They are loving Servants.

The Love of Chriſt conſtraineth them, *becauſe* they *thus judge, that if one died for all, then*

then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they who *live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him* who *died for them, and roſe again* *. His Love draws their Hearts to him, and begets in them a ſincere Affection to his Perſon and Government, and this leads him to obey his Laws; for *if a Man love* Chriſt, *he will keep* his *Words* †. A Miniſter who loves Chriſt will feed his Sheep and his Lambs with vigilant and tender Care; and the private Chriſtian, by the ſame Principle of Love, will be moved to a ſerious Obſervance of his Maſter's Orders and Injunctions. Love cannot but ſtudy to avoid all that is offenſive, and to do every Thing that is pleaſing to the Object thereof.

3. Chriſt's Servants are faithful to him.

They are all Stewards of his manifold Grace, and are entruſted by him with various Gifts and Benefits temporal and ſpiritual, which they labour to improve to his Glory, and the Advantage of their Brethren. They know that their Lord ſees them, and that he will be their Judge, and therefore they endeavour to occupy with his Talents in the beſt Manner, that they

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. † John xiv. 23.

may be approved of him; his Acceptance is their chief Deſire. A faithful Miniſter renounces *the hidden Things of Diſhoneſty, not walking in Craftineſs, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by Manifeſtation of the Truth, commending himſelf to every Man's Conſcience in the Sight of God* *. And every Chriſtian is careful to ſhew all Fidelity in the Improvement of his Time and Mercies.

4. Chriſt's Servants are diligent in his Work.

They often complain againſt themſelves of their ſpiritual Sloth, and are aſhamed to think how little they have done for their Maſter; nevertheleſs they ſleep not as others do, they watch and pray, ſtir up the Gift that is in them, Fight the good Fight of Faith, work out their own Salvation, give all Diligence to make their Calling and Election ſure, and to grow in Grace and Holineſs; they conſider the Greatneſs of their incumbent Duty, the Shortneſs and Uncertainty of their Time, and the infinite Importance of Eternity to which they are ever tending. And theſe Conſiderations impreſſed on their Hearts by the Spirit of God, do quicken them in his Way.

* 2 Cor. iv. 2.

5. Chriſt's

5. Chriſt's Servants perſevere in his Buſineſs.

The Fleſh is weak, and the Spirit may ſometimes be ready to faint under ſore Trials, but they tremble at the Thought of drawing back to Perdition; they will not leave their Maſter, and he will not leave them; by the Supplies of his Grace their Strength is renewed, and they are enabled to endure to the End; they deſire to be chearful in his Service, and when they cannot rejoice, they will ſubmit and obey.

Having thus given a brief Account of the Servants of Chriſt, I proceed,

II. To ſhew, that every one of his Servants muſt follow him.

The Charge is univerſal; *if any Man ſerve me, let him follow me.* This comprehends the whole Duty of a Chriſtian; and ſo coincides with all the Service which Chriſt requires, but it is another and uſeful Expreſſion of the Chriſtian Life, and I ſhall conſider it in an extenſive Latitude, as implying the Adoration of Chriſt's Perſon, the Imitation of his holy Example, the Reſpect we owe to his Word, to his Providence, and the Office of his Holy Spirit.

1. The Adoration of his Perſon, God in our Nature.

In the Old Teſtament the Worſhippers of *Baal* were called his Followers, in Contradiſtinction to the Worſhippers or Followers of the living and true God: *If the Lord be God, follow him* (ſays *Elijah*) *if Baal, follow him* *. In this Senſe we are called to follow Chriſt, to worſhip and honour him, even as we honour the Father; for his Deity is plainly revealed to us in his Word; and his wonderful Self-abaſement and Sufferings for us, are ſo far from being juſt Arguments againſt his Godhead, that it is this which puts an infinite Merit into his Obedience and Paſſion, and which makes his Love therein incomprehenſibly great: He ſuffered in that weak Nature which he aſſumed, not for want of Power to have ſaved himſelf from Death, but to fulfil the Scriptures, and to manifeſt his rich Grace by a precious Sacrifice for our Sins; and though he permitted Men to pull down the ſacred Temple of his Body, yet he raiſed it up again by his own Omnipotence.

2. To follow Chriſt is to imitate his holy life.

He that ſaith he abideth in Chriſt, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked †.

* 1 Kings xviii. 21. † 1 John ii. 6.

Our

Our great Lord has gone before his Subjects in the Way of Obedience, and he hath commanded us to follow him by Self-denial, Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, and Submiſſion, religious Zeal, Charity, Sincerity, Purity of Heart, and Innocency of Behaviour. His Example is a perfect Rule of Righteouſneſs, Goodneſs, and Truth; this Rule his Servants ſhould always ſet before their Eyes, and labour to tranſcribe it more fairly in their Minds and Manners.

The Glory and Beauty of a Chriſtian lies in his Conformity to Chriſt, who did no Sin, nor was Guile found in his Mouth, who went about doing good to the Souls and Bodies of Men, ſhewing Compaſſion and Love, not only to the meaneſt and moſt miſerable, but to the moſt unworthy and guilty Creatures in the World, to them that hated both him and his Father, and under the greateſt Injuries, committed himſelf to the righteous Judge of the whole Earth. If we follow this unſpotted Pattern of Holineſs, we ſhall be very ſenſible of our Defects and Defilements, and ſee daily need of being cleanſed by Chriſt's Blood from the Guilt of Sin, and of the ſanctifying Influences of his Spirit.

3. Follow-

3. Following Chriſt, implies an habitual Reſpect to his Word.

If ye continue in my Word (ſays he) *then are ye my Diſciples indeed: and ye ſhall know the Truth, and the Truth ſhall make you free* *. Chriſt taught his Diſciples while he was with them in the Fleſh, all Things that he had a Commiſſion from his Father to reveal to them; and after his Return to Heaven, he inſpired his Apoſtles by his Spirit, and led them into all Truth; and in their Writings, together with thoſe of *Moſes* and the Prophets, we have a complete and infallible Directory to eternal Life; theſe Scriptures therefore are an ineſtimable Treaſure, and we muſt ſearch them all the Days of our Lives.

We have not the Priviledge of ſeeing Chriſt with our bodily Eyes, nor of hearing him, who ſpake as never Man ſpake; this was the ſingular Happineſs of them that went in and out with him in the Time of his Humiliation; but in the Scriptures we may find his whole Mind and Will with Reference to our Duty and Salvation, and may learn all that we are obliged to believe and do, in order to our everlaſting Felicity.

* John viii. 31, 32.

4. Follow-

4. Following of Jeſus, implies a holy Regard to his Providence.

We are bound to follow him by a diligent Attention to his Word and Ordinances, and likewiſe to his providential Government; he has withdrawn his corporal Preſence from our World, but the Sceptre of the Univerſe is now and ever will be in his Hands; he rules in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth; he upholds all Things by the Word of his Power; he is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; nothing comes to paſs without his Knowledge and Permiſſion; nothing but what he will over-rule to his own Glory, and the Advantage of his People; for he is *Head over all Things to his Church, which is his Body* *. His Church is continually before him, under his Eye and Protection, and therefore the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.

Let his Servants remember that he ſitteth upon the Throne; let them obſerve his Works of divine Wiſdom, Power, Juſtice, Loving-kindneſs, and Truth; let them be ſilent before him, under awful Diſpenſations, caſt all their Cares upon him, and

* Eph. i. 22, 23.

truſt

truſt in him, for their own Safety and Happineſs in all future Times, and for the Preſervation and Welfare of his whole Body; let them keep within their Bounds, and leave him to govern the World; let them follow, but not preſume to direct or limit him; he alone can bear the Weight and Glory of the univerſal Dominion given to him; let him order and appoint; let us obey and reſign.

5. Following of Chriſt, implies a humble and fixed Dependance upon the Grace of his Holy Spirit.

He is a divine Perſon, and equally to be adored with the Father and the Son; but our great Concern reſpects his Work and Office, which is to apply the Benefits of Chriſt's Redemption.

The Servants of Jeſus were born of the Spirit, and muſt live and walk in the Spirit, not only by attending to the external Revelation which was written by his immediate Guidance and Superintendancy, but likewiſe by imploring his internal Light, Aſſiſtance, and Comforts. *If any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his* *. And if any Man have the Spirit of Chriſt in him,

* Rom. viii. 9.

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he will certainly feel a perpetual Want of his divine Teaching, Help, and Conſolations, and will pray every Day for his Conduct and Grace; for as all good Diſpoſitions and Works are the Fruits of the Spirit, ſo by him they are preſerved and increaſed to their Maturity.

He helps the Infirmities of Chriſtians in Prayer, and puts Wiſdom and Life into their Petitions and Praiſes; he reſtrains them from Evil, keeps them in the Fear and Love of God, writes divine Truths upon their Hearts, excites them to Watchfulneſs and Activity in their ſpiritual Courſe, and he is the Witneſs of their Adoption, and the earneſt of their heavenly Inheritance. In brief, the Author of all that is good, holy, and happy in their Hearts.

As the Spirit in all his Operations glorifies Chriſt; ſo Chriſt's Followers glorify him by Adoration, Faith, Love, and Obedience; thus they live and walk in the Spirit.

We have now ſeen the great Duty of the Servants of Jeſus, which is to follow him. What think ye of it, my Brethren? Is it not moſt reaſonable and excellent, univerſally incumbent of indiſpenſable Neceſſity, and of the utmoſt Importance to us all? Is

not Chriſt's Charge attended with ſupreme Authority, and enforced by the moſt endearing and attracting Love? Let us follow him whitherſoever he goeth; follow him by Worſhip and Homage paid to him, by Imitation of his holy Life, Continuance in his Word and Statutes, reſpect to his Providence, and by committing ourſelves to the Grace of his Spirit.

In this Courſe we ſhall meet with Difficulties and diverſe Temptations: for our Support, Let us attend,

3. To the promiſed Reward of Chriſt's Servants in another World.

He hath ſaid it, and it ſhall come to paſs, *where I am, there ſhall alſo my Servant be.* He came from Heaven, and with reſpect to his Divinity, was there even when he bleſſed this Earth with his viſible Preſence; to Heaven he is gone, having finiſhed the Work that was given him to do in our Nature and World; and to Heaven he will lead all his Followers, in whatever Situations of Life they were appointed to ſerve him in the preſent State.

Our Ideas of the future Bleſſedneſs reſerved for Chriſtians are very inadequate and imperfect: I deſire to aſſiſt you as well

as

as I can in the Contemplation of this glorious Object, by a Compariſon of the different Abodes of Chriſt's Servants in the Fleſh, and with their Maſter in Glory.

The Apoſtles, and firſt Chriſtians, were very excellent Men, and had their Converſation in Heaven before they went to the full Enjoyment of it, and yet they declared, *that* while they were preſent *in the Body*, they were *abſent from the Lord*; *and* therefore they deſired *rather to be abſent from the Body, and preſent with the Lord* *, *for* they walked *by Faith, and not by Sight*. How much more may we ſay, *that we* while *at Home in the Body, are abſent from the Lord?*

If we are Chriſtians indeed, yet we have reaſon to look upon ourſelves as Chriſtians, of a Rank inferior to them; the Lord is indeed with us by his Word, Providence, and Spirit (bleſſed be his Name for his gracious Preſence!) but we are not with him, ſo as his Saints departed this Life are and ever ſhall be in the heavenly Habitations.

We are with him by Faith, Love, Deſire, and Hope, and yet there is a great Diſtance between him and us; he is in his

* 2 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8.

Father's Houſe, we are in Houſes of Clay
he in pureſt Light, we in a Region o
Clouds and Darkneſs; he in Paradiſe, w
in a deſolate howling Wilderneſs; he in th
Midſt of Friends, we in the Land of Ene-
mies; he in a World of Saints, we in
World of Sinners; he in Reſt and Joy, w
in Labours, Perils, and Sorrows. At thi
Diſtance we know but little of him, we ſe
darkly through a Glaſs; our Apprehenſion
of him are low, and ſavoring of the Earth
to which we cleave; our Love to him i
feeble and mutable; our Likeneſs to him i
obſcured by many Spots that are upon us
our Converſe with him is by Means ſuited
to the Infancy of our Being; and our En-
joyment of his Love is partial and interrupt-
ed. Our Hearts are divided, and viſibl
Things ſteal away too much of our Affec-
tion from him. If at any Time we ſee hi
Beauty, and taſte of his Grace, and are ap
to think we ſhall never loſe the ſweet Re
membrance and Reliſh of our Communio
with him; how ſoon are we convinced b
ſad Experience of our Error? Something o
other intervenes and ſeparates between hi
and us; we bewail our Inconſtancy, whic
nevertheleſs is frequently repeated in variou
Inſtances. Wha

What Work does a deceitful and wandering Heart make for Repentance? And how needful is it that we ſhould have many Afflictions to humble us, and that Death ſhould be ſent to take down the polluted Tabernacle of our Body, to which the Leproſy of Sin cleaves? In theſe Reſpects it is certain, that the Servants of Chriſt are in the preſent Life abſent from the Lord; but after this Life they ſhall be preſent with him, be where he is, in the ſame Place, and Partakers of his Glory and Happineſs. The Maſter and the Servant ſhall meet together, and no more be ſeparated at the End of this tranſitory Scene of Exiſtence in the Fleſh, the Soul as ſoon as it leaves the Body is with Chriſt in Paradiſe; *the Spirits of juſt Men* after Death are *made perfect*, live with Angels, and with the Lord of Angels and Men Jeſus Chriſt, and with *God the Judge of all* *. They behold Chriſt's Glory and Share in it; they ſhine in his Rays, and are like him in Holineſs undefiled; they are preſented a pure Church, fair, lovely, faultleſs, without Spot, or Wrinkle, or any ſuch Thing, and they receive, according to their Capacity, of the Plenitude of their Maſter's Joy; being where

* Heb. xii. 23.

he

he is, they ſhall have no more to do with Sin, Sorrow, or Mortality, but be full of Light, Love, Purity, Peace, and Pleaſure.

The Preſence of the Lord will illuminate their Underſtandings, perfect his Image in them, and diffuſe Liberty, moral Rectitude, and the moſt rational Gladneſs through all the Powers of their Souls; every Chriſtian taken out of our World is a new Member, introduced into the Family and Church of Heaven; and at the great Day the Bodies of the Saints that ſleep in Jeſus ſhall be raiſed up, and made incorruptible, immortal, ſpiritual, and like to the glorious Body of the Son of God; and all his People ſhall be collected, and in their whole Perſons glorified with him. *For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God; and the Dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt*; and *then* the living Saints *ſhall be* transformed in a Moment, and *caught up together* with the raiſed dead *in the Clouds*, to meet *the Lord in the Air*; *and ſo ſhall they ever be with the Lord* *. This is the Reward promiſed to the Servants of Chriſt, to all of them without Exception,

* 1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17.

though

hough there may be a Diſtinction, in Or-
der and Degree of Bleſſedneſs hereafter, ac-
cording to the different Meaſures of Grace
nd Holineſs that are found among the Diſ-
ciples of Jeſus in this Life. Miniſters that
have been wiſe to win Souls, and that have
urned many to Righteouſneſs, may ſhine as
Stars of the firſt Magnitude with a peculiar
Glory, and others that have excelled in
Goodneſs, may riſe higher than their Bre-
hren, in the Felicities of the celeſtial King-
dom; but certain it is, all faithful Followers
f Chriſt ſhall be where he is, and be filled
with Happineſs in his Preſence. If you
ſk what Security have Chriſtians to ſupport
o great a Hope as this? I anſwer, all the
ecurity that can with Reaſon be deſired;
hey have the Word and Oath of the living
God, the Teſtimony of his Son, the true
nd faithful Witneſs, the Merit of his
Blood, the Power of his Reſurrection, his
ternal Life, Reign, and Advocacy, the
ew and everlaſting Covenant, and the Ex-
erience of the Grace of the Holy Ghoſt;
hey have all theſe concurring Cauſes and
Reaſons to confirm their Expectation of
ternal Life in the Kingdom of Heaven;
nd what need they more? Our Head is
glorified

glorified, and entered into the Sanctuary above as our Forerunner, to prepare Mansions for us, and his Members ſhall be advanced to a Fellowſhip with him in his Exaltation. Their Happineſs is unſeen and future; but Things unſeen and future, are no leſs certain than the Objects of Senſe; the Vail of Time will be taken away, and a bleſſed Eternity be opened e're long to the Servants of Chriſt, and they ſhall poſſeſs the Felicity for which they are now waiting.

Let us attend to the practical Improvement of this Subject.

1. Let me in a ſolemn and earneſt Manner call and invite every one of my Hearers to ſerve and follow the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that they may be with him where he is.

'Tis a ſad Truth, but confirmed by Scripture and Experience, that Mankind are a Race of fallen, guilty, and loſt Creatures, Children of Wrath, and of Diſobedience, and Servants of Sin; but the Service of Sin is unreaſonable, ſhameful, and deſtructive to Soul and Body; the Wages of Sin is Death, it may promiſe us Pleaſure and Profit, but everlaſting Miſery is the Conſequence of it.

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The Goſpel brings glad Tidings to Sinners, aſſuring them that Chriſt came to ſave that which was loſt, that he hath ſuffered the Juſt for the Unjuſt, that he might bring them back again to God, and that whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not periſh, but ſhall have eternal Life. He now calls you to rely on his Blood, and to conſent to his Government, what can you object? Has he not a rightful Claim to your Love and Service? Is he not your Creator and Redeemer? Has he not all Power and Authority? And how gracious and merciful is he? Behold he opens his Arms to embrace Rebels that ſubmit to him! If you come to him, he will in no wiſe caſt you out. Conſider likewiſe his Love to his Servants; he accounts them his Brethren and Friends, and has promiſed them all needful Aſſiſtance and Comfort in this Life, and unfading Glory in the Life to come. How inexcuſable ſhall we be if we will not ſerve him! How ſhall we eſcape his juſt Wrath, or ſtand before him, when he comes to judge the World in Righteouſneſs! Let us hear his Voice, while he ſpeaks to us by the Word of his Grace, and whatever others do, let us ſerve Chriſt.

2. Let the Servants and Followers of Jeſus rejoice in Hope.

In the World you muſt expect Afflictions and Conflicts; but you have good Reaſon to be thankful and joyful, for you ſerve a Maſter who loves you, will provide for you and is leading you home to his own Habitation, where you ſhall be perfectly bleſſed to all Eternity. Be patient, couragious ſtedfaſt, and immoveable, always abounding in the Works of the Lord; indulge no deſponding Thoughts, let not the World have any Occaſion from your exceſſive Fears and Dejection to think you ſerve a hard Maſter, and repent of your Engagements to him. Lament your Negligences and Sins, but diſtruſt not his ſaving Power, Love, and Faithfulneſs. You are weak but he is ſtrong, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name; you are poor and needy, but he is rich and bountiful; you have many Enemies, but oh! that one Friend the bleſſed Jeſus, can and will make you Conquerors and more than Conquerors. Recollect the great Promiſe of his, *to him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my Throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his Throne* *.

* Rev. iii. 21.

3. Let the Doctrine that we have heard teach us to moderate our Sorrows for the Loſs of thoſe Servants of Chriſt whom he hath removed from our World, for they are gone to a better World, and are with him where he is. Death is eternal Gain to them, they reſt from their Labours, from Sin, Temptation, and all the Train of Evils, which are the Attendants of Mortality; their departed Spirits are in Joy, far ſurpaſſing all our Conceptions; and their Bodies that Sleep in the Duſt, ſhall awake in the Morning of the Reſurrection, and be glorified with their better Part, and die no more. We ſhould not weep for them as if they were loſt, but conſider them as gone before to the bliſsful Preſence and Fruition of their and our Redeemer; and follow their Faith and Patience, that when we have finiſhed our Courſe, we may with them inherit the Promiſes.

Thus ſhould we improve the Providence that has taken from us my dear and honoured Brother, your late Miniſter, whom you loved, and whoſe valuable Labours were ſo many Years continued to you by the great and gracious Lord of the Harveſt; you will not diſpute his Right to call away

a weary Laborer to his Reſt and Reward; but bleſs God for the Service he was enabled to do in the Vineyard, and comfort yourſelves with the Conſideration of his Happineſs.

I could wiſh an abler Hand had been employed in repreſenting the Character of the Rev. Mr. *Edward Godwin*; but I am ſenſible he ſought not great Applauſe while living, nor deſired to be extolled highly after Death by any of his Brethren. Let a few Hints ſuffice therefore in this Part of my Diſcourſe.

Your deceaſed Paſtor was endowed with good natural Capacities, which were refined by Grace, and improved by a cloſe and long Application to the moſt uſeful Studies. I am informed, that before he entered on public Service, his Proficiency in Academical Learning was ſo great, that upon the Death of his worthy Tutor *, he had an earneſt Invitation to ſucceed him in the important Province of educating young Perſons for the Miniſtry. This, however, he modeſtly refuſed; and Providence had other Work in view for him. He came to this City in the Days of his Youth, and was or-

* The Rev. Mr. *Jones*, of *Tewkeſbury*.

dained

dained Co-paſtor in this Church, with that eminent Servant of Chriſt Mr. *Robinſon*, in the Year 1722; and ſoon after, by his Deceaſe, became the ſole Paſtor of this Chriſtian Society, in which Relation he continued almoſt to the End of his Life; for the ſpace of more than forty Years he miniſtred in this Place. He was always learning and increaſing his rich Treaſures of ſacred Knowledge, by great Aſſiduity in the Labours of the Cloſet, perhaps this might be hurtful to his Conſtitution; but his Heart was much in religious Retirement, and his Aim therein was, I doubt not, to honour his Maſter, and be more thoroughly furniſhed for every good Word and Work. By the bleſſing of God on his Meditations and Reading, you all know he was apt to teach, and a Scribe, well inſtructed in the Matters of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The great and peculiar Doctrines of the Goſpel were his Delight; theſe he opened with good Judgment, defended with a Zeal, not furious, but fervent, and applied in lively Addreſſes to Men's Conſciences and Hearts.

In Prayer he was very excellent, conciſe, clear, regular, and ſpiritual; and upon extraordinary

traordinary Occaſions (as I have often obſerved, with much Pleaſure) remarkably copious, free, and enlarged.

He was great in Humility, Meekneſs, and Patience; in common Converſation he was a Man of few Words, but open and undiſguiſed, calm and gentle. Doubtleſs he had his Failings and Imperfections; but his moral Character was fair and unblemiſhed in the World; and as a Chriſtian and a Miniſter, I believe few have been more generally eſteemed and loved by good Men of all Denominations than he was.

As a Diſſenter, he acted upon the Principle of Chriſtian Liberty, and adorned his Profeſſion by a moderate and peaceable Spirit. Beſides his Attention to his own particular Flock, his Care for the Churches in the Country, appeared by his unwearied Diligence in the Part aſſigned to him in the Management of ſome public Truſts, relative to the Support of the diſſenting Intereſt.

The latter Days of his Pilgrimage were imbittered by many bodily Infirmities which nevertheleſs he bore with Chriſtian Fortitude and Reſignation, continuing in his Pulpit-work as long as his Strength would permit, and (as yourſelves were ſym-

pathizing

pathizing Witneſſes) ſometimes he laboured beyond Strength; the Lamp of Life waſted gradually, and at laſt was extinguiſhed almoſt inſenſibly.

As there is ſomething in the Preface of his laſt Will and Teſtament very ſtriking and inſtructive, I, by Permiſſion, repeat ſome of his Words.

He ſtiles himſelf leſs than the leaſt of all the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt; and then ſays, 'In the firſt Place, I renew and ratify the 'Dedication, and Surrender of myſelf to 'God, committing all I am into his Hands 'through Grace, depending only on the 'Righteouſneſs of Chriſt for Acceptance, 'on the immediate Return of my Spirit 'unto him that gave it, and looking for the 'Mercy of the Lord Jeſus unto eternal Life 'at the great Day of his Appearing, when 'my Body ſhall be raiſed from the Duſt, in 'which I leave it, *&c.*'

May the Comforts of God refreſh the mourning Relatives of the Deceaſed! May a divine Bleſſing reſt on his dear Son, my much reſpected Brother, and his Family; and may it pleaſe God long to preſerve, and abundantly to proſper him in his Miniſtry!

You,

You, my Friends of this Church, have loſt a beloved Paſtor, we condole your Affliction; at the ſame Time praiſing God for the Mercy you have lately received in the Settlement of a very hopeful young Miniſter among you. May you rejoice many Years in his growing Light! Be ſtill (as heretofore) a united and affectionate Church; and may the Lord add to you, from Time to Time, ſuch as ſhall be ſaved!

Let us all, whether Miniſters or private Perſons, improve the various Inſtances of Mortality that are preſented to us, as Motives to Diligence in the Service of Chriſt, that when we die we may enter into his everlaſting Reſt and Joy. To whom be Glory for ever! *Amen.*

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THE END.